

Coronavirus FAQ

Now is the time to prepare for COVID-19. Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference. Action now will help protect your employees and your business.

What is 2019-nCoV Coronavirus?

2019-nCoV (Coronavirus) is virus that causes the COVID-19 respiratory illness. It was first detected in Wuhan, China. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Typically, respiratory viruses are most contagious when an individual is most symptomatic, but there have been reports of the virus spreading when the affected individual does not show any symptoms.

How is it Spread?

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If they are standing within one meter of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. **Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover.** However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care.

- Risk of serious illness rises with age: people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40.
- People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days to as long as 14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

What are simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace?

The low-cost measures below will help prevent the spread of infections in your workplace, such as colds, flu and stomach bugs, and protect your customers, contractors and employees. Employers should start doing these things now, even if COVID-19 has not arrived in the communities where they operate. They can already reduce working days lost due to illness and stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 if it arrives at one of your workplaces

- **Make sure your workplaces are clean and hygienic**
 - **Surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly**
 - Why? Because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads

- **Promote regular and thorough handwashing by employees, contractors and customers**
 - Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace.
 - Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled
 - Display posters promoting hand-washing – ask your local public health authority for these or look on www.WHO.int.
 - Combine this with other communication measures such as offering guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefings at meetings and information on the intranet to promote handwashing
 - Make sure that staff, contractors and customers have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water
 - **Why? Because washing kills the virus on your hands and prevents the spread of COVID19**

- **Promote good respiratory hygiene in the workplace**
 - Display posters promoting respiratory hygiene. Combine this with other communication measures such as offering guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefing at meetings and information on the intranet etc.
 - Ensure that face masks (Ordinary surgical face masks rather than N95 are fine) and / or paper tissues are available at your workplaces, for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them
 - **Why? Because good respiratory hygiene prevents the spread of COVID-19 • Advise employees and contractors to consult national travel advice before going on business trips**

- **Brief your employees, contractors and customers that if COVID-19 starts spreading in your community anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more) needs to stay at home.**
 - They should also stay home (or work from home) if they have had to take simple medications, such as paracetamol/acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin, which may mask symptoms of infection
 - Keep communicating and promoting the message that people need to stay at home even if they have just mild symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Display posters with this message in your workplaces. Combine this with other communication channels commonly used in your organization or business.
 - Your occupational health services, local public health authority or other partners may have developed campaign materials to promote this message
 - Make clear to employees that they will be able to count this time off as sick leave.

How do I get my business ready in case COVID-19 arrives in your community?

- **Develop a plan of what to do if someone becomes ill with suspected COVID-19 at one of your workplaces**
 - The plan should cover putting the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others in the workplace, limiting the number of people who have contact with the sick person and contacting the local health authorities.
 - Consider how to identify persons who may be at risk, and support them, without inviting stigma and discrimination into your workplace. This could include persons who have recently travelled to an area reporting cases, or other personnel who have conditions that put them at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. diabetes, heart and lung disease, older age).
 - If you serve or prepare food or snacks
 - There's a big difference between cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning removes food and other types of soil from a surface such as a countertop or plate. Sanitizing reduces the number of pathogens on the clean surface to safe levels. To be effective, cleaning and sanitizing must be a 5-step process.
 - **Step 1** **Scrape and remove food from surfaces**
 - **Step 2** **Wash the surface**
 - **Step 3** **Rinse the surface**
 - **Step 4** **Sanitize the surface**
 - **Step 5** **Let the surface air dry**
 - When to Clean and Sanitize
 - Each time you use a surface or tool
 - After handling raw fruits or vegetables
 - When you begin working with a different type of food

- Clean and sanitize often and at least every 4 hours when items are in constant use
 - If someone should have a body fluid event
 - Ensure the employee who is cleaning up the area is using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Segregate the area that has been contaminated
 - Frequently clean and sanitize the area to include the floor, walls and any other objects contaminated by the incident
 - Properly dispose any of the equipment that was used to clean up the area
 - Tell your local public health authority you are developing the plan and seek their input
- **Develop a contingency and *business continuity plan* for an outbreak in the communities where your business operates**
 - The plan will help prepare your organization for the possibility of an outbreak of COVID19 in its workplaces or community. It may also be valid for other health emergencies.
 - The plan should address how to keep your business running even if a significant number of employees, contractors and suppliers cannot come to your place of business - either due to local restrictions on travel or because they are ill.
 - Communicate to your employees and contractors about the plan and make sure they are aware of what they need to do – or not do – under the plan. Emphasize key points such as the importance of staying away from work even if they have only mild symptoms or have had to take simple medications (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen) which may mask the symptoms.
 - Be sure your plan addresses the mental health and social consequences of a case of COVID-19 in the workplace or in the community and offer information and support.
 - For small and medium-sized businesses without in-house staff health and welfare support, develop partnerships and plans with your local health and social service providers in advance of any emergency.
 - Your local or national public health authority may be able to offer support and guidance in developing your plan

SOURCE – World Health Organization and Darden Restaurant Group